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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, March 15, 1933.

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

Subject: "A St. Patrick's Day Dinner," Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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All of us who have a little of old Erin in our blood -- and all of us who wish we had some -- will be celebrating the great day of the Irish Patron saint on Friday. How about carrying out the wearin' of the green on your dinner table and serving a meal with a green color scheme? St. Patrick's Day is a fine time for entertaining, especially for giving a company dinner. Emerald green is a refreshing springlike color that makes the table very attractive. This color is easy to feature both in the food you serve and in the table decorations. Anyone with clever fingers and a little imagination can make all sorts of attractive favors for the occasion featuring different Irish symbols, such as shamrocks, harps, Irish terriers, potatoes, little pigs, a pipe for Paddy, and even woolly lambs or shepherd's crooks, since, according to the old legend, St. Patrick was a shepherd. A bowl of green ivy makes a simple and suitable centerpiece for the table. White narcissus and green leaves will carry out a green and white color scheme.

But these are the extras after all. The chief point of interest is the dinner itself. Since St. Patrick's Day falls on Friday, and a Lenten Friday at that, we're serving a fish dinner to our guests. Broiled fish is the first item on the menu. Then, boiled white potatoes served with parsley butter; Green spinach or Broccoli; White Cornbread; Shamrock salad made of green peppers stuffed with white soft cheese; and, for dessert, Lime ice or sliced bananas and pineapple molded in green lime gelatin. Once more: Broiled fish; Potatoes in parsley butter; Spinach or Broccoli; Cornbread; Shamrock salad; and for dessert, Lime ice or white fruit molded in green lime jelly. If you want to make this meal a little more elaborate and festive, you can add such extras as green olives and white celery; little white cakes or white cookies to serve with the dessert; and green and white candies to top off the meal.

Shamrock salad is one of the prettiest salads I know of. Select some medium-sized, perfect green peppers. Wash them. Cut off the stem end from each pepper and scrape out the seeds and extra pulp from the inside. Then fill the cavity with white soft cream cheese or seasoned cottage cheese. Press the cheese in very firmly. Then set the stuffed peppers away in the refrigerator to chill. When chilled through and very firm, get out your long, thin, very sharp slicing knife and cut the peppers in thin slices. Lay these slices on crisp lettuce leaves. Serve this simple salad with mayonnaise. The slices suggest the shamrock design with a green edge and a white center.

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Now about the broiled fish. Of all the ways to cook fish, broiling is one of the best and easiest. You can broil over the coals in your wood or coal stove or over an open campfire. If you have a gas range, you'll broil in the oven under the direct flame. If you have an electric stove, you'll broil in the oven under the direct heat. Most oil cooking stoves are equipped with a broiler. Broiling is quick and easy and gives food a delicious flavor.

The markets today offer a wide choice of fish for the housewife to choose from. You can buy fresh fish sold whole. Or you can buy fish fillets -- fish that has been cleaned, boned and wrapped in parchment paper before going to market and shipped frozen. You can buy sole, haddock, cod and mackerel wrapped and packaged this way ready for use. Or you can also buy slices of the larger sea fish. But whether you are choosing small fish or fillets or sliced fish like salmon, broiling is a good method to use. You can arrange the fillets skin side down on a greased boiler rack in a baking pan, sprinkle with salt and pepper and brush with melted oil before broiling. The same holds for a slice of fish. Broil small fish like smelts without splitting. The head may or may not be removed, as you prefer. Medium-sized fish you split open and lay flat before broiling. Such fish are trout, catfish, croppies, croakers, black bass or even fresh mackerel -- all depending on what your market offers. These medium-sized fresh fish are the ones the Menu Specialist suggests for our St. Patrick's Day dinner. And here's exactly how you fix them. Split the fish down the back -- or have that done at the market. Wipe it clean, if necessary, and remove any scales as well as the head and tail. Lay the whole fish skin side down on a shallow greased pan. If the fish is oily like mackerel or salmon, you won't need to add fat. Otherwise add enough fat to season well. Now place your fish under the flame in a broiler at moderate heat and cook for twenty to thirty minutes. Slip the broiled fish carefully onto a hot platter. Season with salt and pepper. Pour on the drippings. Garnish with cress or parsley and sliced lemon. Serve at once. If the fish is very large and thick, heat it for from fifteen to twenty minutes in a moderate oven before putting it under the broiler flame.

Tomorrow: "Odds and Ends of Household News."

